

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 SAM-01 SSO-00

INRE-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8152

INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY

CSAF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

MAC SCOTT AFB ILL IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5403

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, PO

SUBJ: RETURN OF EAST TIMOR REFUGEES

REF: THOMAS-KELLY AUG 9 TELECON

1. REF TELECON CONVEYED URGENT GOP REQUEST TO ME FROM AIR FORCE CHIEF MORAIS DA SILVA FOR US ASSISTANCE IN TRANSPORTING APPROXIMATELY 263 EAST TIMOR REFUGEES FROM GUAM TO THE AZORES.

2. SUBSEQUENT TO REF TELECON, WE HAVE LEARNED THAT MORAIS DA SILVA'S REQUEST CAME AS RESULT OF DISCUSSION OF MATTER WITH PRESIDENT EANES.

3. GOP IS MAKING MAXIMUM EFFORT TO DEAL WITH PROBLEM USING OWN RESOURCES. WITH NATIONAL AIRLINE (TAP) AIRCRAFT FULLY COMMITTED TO SUMMER FREQUENCIES, PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE (PAF) IS PREPARING TO SEND ITS AVAILABLE 707 TO BALI. PAF PROPOSES TO FERRY 408 REFUGEES, NOW IN BALI, FROM BALI TO GUAM. PAF 707 CAN CARRY 145 PASSENGERS ON RETURN TO PORTUGAL. GOP REQUESTS
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US ASSISTANCE IN TRANSPORTING REMAINING 263 FROM GUAM TO THE

AZORES, WHERE PAF DC-6 CAN FERRY THEM TO LISBON.

4. IN VIEW OF TRAUMA ALREADY SUFFERED BY REFUGEES AND GOP FEAR THAT THEY MAY AGAIN BECOME COMPLICATED FACTOR IN THE INDONESIAN ABSORPTION OF EAST TIMOR, THE GOP IS UNDERSTANDABLY ANXIOUS TO MOVE THEM OUT OF INDONESIA AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE.

5. RECOMMENDATION: PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF PRESIDENT EANES'S PERSONAL INTEREST IN MATTER, I STRONGLY URGE WE HELP GOP ON THIS REQUEST. PAF IS SHORT OF TRAINED 707 CREW AND CANNOT PROVIDE REQUIRED AIRLIFT; TAP, IN FINANCIAL TROUBLE, WOULD HAVE TO BREAK INTO ITS HEAVY SUMMER SCHEDULE TO COME UP WITH AN AIRCRAFT. SUFFERING ALREADY ENDURED BY REFUGEES ARGUES FOR SPEEDY ACTION ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS.

6. ADDITIONAL FACTOR IS THAT TRANSPORTING REFUGEES TO LAJES BASE IN AZORES WITH U.S. ASSISTANCE WOULD UNQUESTIONABLY BE RECEIVED MOST FAVORABLY BY OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF PORTUGUESE. USE OF AZORES BASE FOR THIS PURPOSE WOULD DEMONSTRATE AGAIN UTILITY OF JOINT PORTUGUESE-USG OPERATION. WITH BASE NEGOTIATIONS LOOMING IN NEAR FUTURE, BELIEVE THIS IS AN IMPORTANT POINT WHICH SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEE RELIEF, REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MILITARY AIRLIFTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LISBON05403
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760307-0511
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760869/aaaacikg.tel
Line Count: 84
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <01 SEP 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RETURN OF EAST TIMOR REFUGEES
TAGS: EAID, SREF, PO, PT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006